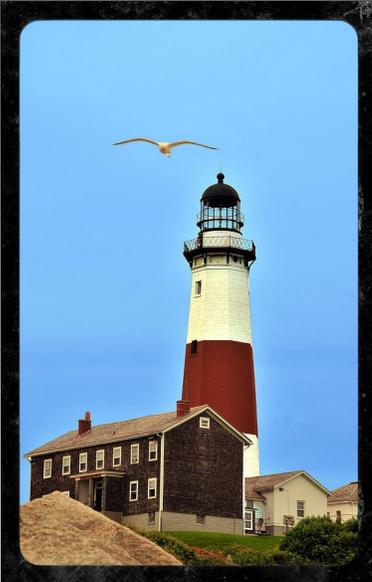


**Volume 34 Issue 1
October/November
2020**

AFT Local 3037/ NYSUT Local 22-220

The BEES Beacon

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk



*From the Lighthouse
in the East
to the Lighthouse
in the West*

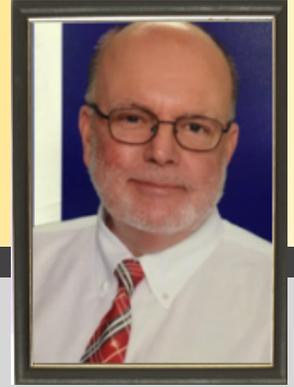


What's Inside

- The President's Report - pp. 2**
- The Executive Vice Presidents' Reports - pp. 4 & 6**
- The First Vice President's Report - pp. 9**
- Area VP for Para Educators Report - pp. 10**
- Area VP for Special Education Report - pp. 11**
- Area VP for Itinerants/SAS Report - pp. 14**
- Area VP for CTE/SCE Report - pp. 15**
- Contractual Benefits Report - pp. 16**
- Membership Secretary's Report - pp. 17**
- Treasurer's Report - pp. 19**
- Grievance Officer's Report - pp. 20**
- Social Chairperson's Report - pp. 22**
- Recording Secretary's Note - pp. 23**
- Retiree Chairperson's Note - pp. 24**



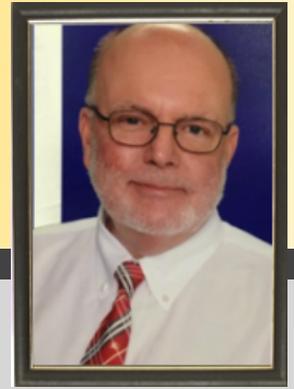
Union Strong



Greetings my sisters and brothers. Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. As I write this, we are all back in our respective buildings doing what we do best: teaching kids and transforming lives. What a different world we live in. Wearing masks has become second nature and remaining socially distant is always on our minds. Gone are the handshakes and hugs replaced by elbow bumps and air kisses. Unfortunately, these are but a poor shadow of our former ways to express friendship, greetings and love. These are just a few things with which we have had to deal.

Thank you all who attended our opening day meeting. Sorry I could not attend, but I was medically indisposed at the time. I have been repeatedly told that Asha and the executive board did a great job. As you know, we worked long and hard to make sure that everyone was paid during the time our schools were closed. We also negotiated agreements that covered and protected our members while we were working remotely. In addition, we negotiated a PPD (Personal Pandemic Day) for everyone in both contracts. They do not carry over to next year and must be used by the end of the school year. This year continues to be challenging, as our being back at school continues to morph and change. We have gotten an agreement to provide some extra money to our instructional staff with FULL schedules that voluntarily take on additional instructional responsibilities by giving up their prep or lunch. It is not perfect, but it is an attempt to get compensation for their extra work. Despite those who may disagree, it is the right thing to do.

Union Strong



Money and resources are critical for districts to keep funding our programs. With actual unemployment numbers for the country hovering around 20%, tax revenues for the state are way down. With no new relief package coming forth from the federal government, at least prior to the upcoming election, schools in NY State are hard pressed to meet their financial commitments. We are hopeful that this may be resolved when the election is decided. We encourage all of our members to vote for those candidates that promote union values and financial relief for our schools. That, of course, is nothing but common sense in voting for our best interests. No one, for example, could imagine voting for something that would ensure our destruction. Such is the world we live in today.

As we attempt to navigate this new reality, I want to thank all of our loyal union members. I want you to know that we will continue to work as hard for you as we always have. I am proud to represent you in any and all issues. To those who have left our union, you are always welcome back into the BEES family, but until then, you are not entitled to any representation. Remember to get out and vote, follow CDC protocols and stay safe.

As always, my friends, I close with unity and strength.

Jim Beck



Executive Vice President - Asha Mazza-Shaw

In Gratitude



Greetings BEES members,

I wish I could have welcomed you all back to a more normalized school year. When we left so abruptly last March, I never thought we would still be dealing with the effects of COVID-19 in the fall. Despite the challenges, the constant changes and uncertainties of it all, we have remained steadfast in our goal of making it the best experience for our students that we possibly can. I have always had great respect for each and every position within this agency, from our paras, our speech pathologists, social workers, music, art and phys. Ed. teachers, school psychologists, professional development trainers, guidance counselors, CTE teachers, to our elementary, middle and high school teachers. Our BEES contracts cover so many groups within the agency and affords me the opportunity to see and hear from people in all areas. There have been many challenges these past six months, for all of us. Those of us on the executive board have been working through those same challenges as well as learning about the unique difficulties facing each subgroup of the BEES. We have been meeting much more frequently to try and rectify issues as they arise and make sure that our contractual language is being upheld. Still, many of these are circumstances that have no language, as these are unprecedented times. As always, we welcome conversations with our members about concerns and questions. We are open to suggestions and ideas, and we are listening. Thank you all for your patience and your continued support as we do our best to support you through these difficult times. I am amazed at the dedication and love we all have for our students here at ES BOCES; you are all inspirational.

I would like to address the virtual teaching model in our special education programs for a moment. It looks different from building to building, depending on population. Some buildings are able to “live stream” while others have an “extra class period” of teaching students who are learning remotely. Let’s backtrack for a moment because many members have asked why we can’t just have virtual classes with virtual teachers. During the summer months when we were doing our best to plan for what seemed to be the impossible, that was the initial thought. Then our districts began telling the agency that if the students were going to just be in virtual classes, they were going to pull them back from BOCES and educate them virtually themselves. At that time, we had about two hundred virtual students. As an executive board, we decided that was a risk we did not want to take. That many students lost would mean too many jobs at risk. Therefore, we agreed with the agency’s plan to place those students on the in-person rosters so they could be easily transitioned to in-person learning and follow their schedules. Currently, we have three hundred fifty virtual students; imagine how many jobs may have been lost if the districts pulled all those children back. How many paras, new teachers, and new itinerants may have lost their jobs...we realize that the virtual model is extra work, but we feel it was worth saving our most vulnerable members.

Executive Vice President - Asha Mazza-Shaw

In Gratitude



A reminder to those of you in the Blue contract: if you plan to take any coursework, please be sure to complete your preapproval paperwork! I cannot stress the importance of this preapproval enough. If that paperwork is not completed prior to your taking courses and then you put in for a professional advancement, your advancement will be denied. This language exists in our employee handbook on page ten. You can get both the preapproval form and the professional advancement form on e-docs. Please read the instructions on the forms as well.

As previously mentioned, the things we are doing now have never been done before. We are pioneering a new way of teaching. Situations arise daily that need immediate attention. Sometimes the answer is simple, and sometimes it's extremely complicated. Please know that whether it's easy or complex, we are on your side and we will get the information. At times, getting that information means developing new language and practices, sometimes it means looking at practices from other places. We are doing all of those things. We regularly speak with our Labor Relations Specialist from NYSUT who informs us about our component districts practices and NYSUT policies. We also meet and speak with different upper administrators and building administrators throughout the agency to address issues that come up or with which we are concerned. Our building representatives are able to bring their concerns to your building level SDM committees and to our executive board members at any time. Please seek out your building representative if you have a question or a concern. Your contract and Employee Handbooks often contain much of the information members ask about, so please take a look at those as well.

I thank each and every one of you for sticking with our union. Now more than ever we have to stick together. We recognize the hard work you are all doing, and we are so thankful to have members like you. We will continue to work our hardest to represent the best interests of our diverse membership. I wish you all good health.

Asha



Executive Vice President - Al Rios



Better Together

First, I want to welcome all our colleagues back from what proved to be a summer like we have never witnessed before. To our new members, I want to welcome you to The BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk. I want you all to know that YOUR union is here for you and we appreciate and thank you for becoming a part of our family.

It is important that each of you know and become familiar with your building representatives. We have a representative for yellow contract members and blue contract members in each of our programs. Reach out and find out who they are. If you have any questions, concerns or need clarification of your role, responsibilities or rights, do not hesitate to ask. Your building rep. is there for exactly that reason. They will be able to answer your question, steer you in the right direction or if they are not sure they will know who to contact.

I want all our members to know that your voice is important. Nobody should feel like you can't ask questions. BOCES covers a great geographical area throughout Suffolk County and is comprised of many unique programs with many different needs. It is for this reason that we have building Reps. In each of our programs. So please ask if you are not sure and remember if you have a question about something, chances are other members have the same question.

There are many topics I considered writing about to start off our union's 2020-2021 school year newsletter. I could have written about the Covid-19 pandemic, which has impacted every aspect of our lives, or about what is proving to be one of the most divisive elections in our lifetime, but in light of all these important current events, I thought it paramount to wish each and every one of our members a safe, healthy and productive 2020-2021 school year.

As I sit here and type these words I can't help but wonder what the rest of this year is going to look like. If it is anything like the end of the 2019-2020 school year I would wish I could push the reset button and have it start like normal school years past. We all know that this is not the reality of the situation we find ourselves in. The idea of our methods in dealing with this reality being sustainable long-term is still a big question in my mind, but I realize that we must persevere regardless.

This has been a beginning of a school year like no other. If I heard it once I heard it 100 times that "we are in uncharted waters," or "no one has had to do this before."



Executive Vice President - Al Rios



Better Together

I feel like I am in my first year of teaching. I am learning about new platforms to navigate in an effort to glean methods as to how to organize and manage student information. I need to modify what I know about student behavior management in person to apply effective techniques virtually. I am trying to ascertain how to provide the best possible educational experience to my students in my class while simultaneously attempting to address the needs of those at home. All of this while constantly trying to diligently incorporate social distancing practices into the process to protect the health and safety of my students, myself and my loved ones.

Yet, I find myself still constantly trying to make my teaching better because I know what I am providing is not anything close to what I have accomplished in years past as a teacher. I really thought something was wrong, I thought I was the only one feeling overwhelmed, confused, exhausted and frustrated but I have come to understand from my colleagues that there are many of us feeling the same way.

The end of last year was difficult for all of us. The sudden end of school as we knew it was not to be. Instead, we had to quickly adapt and provide virtual teaching with little to no hands-on experience or formal training. The stress of this was only compounded by the inability to enjoy the collegial comfort and process of the farewells to departing colleagues and the final goodbyes to our graduating students, important milestones that instill significant gratification and camaraderie to our careers and profession.

I believe it was Walt Disney who said, “Progress is impossible without change.” We have certainly had our share of change in the past seven months. I am writing to let each and every one of our members know that you are not alone if you are experiencing any of these feelings. This is a challenging time for everyone. Not only are we thinking about our own health and safety as well as the safety of our loved ones and families but we are attempting to make the best of an unknown situation. I have seen our members pull together, help each other out and support each other get us through this. Yes, we will get through this and we will have dozens of stories to talk about. We will be stronger, better equipped to deal with changes in the future and we will learn from this.

So, the next time you are feeling like there is no end in sight, you should know that there are more than 1,500 of your “brothers and sisters” going through exactly what you are, and together we will persevere.

Finally, I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for sticking together, supporting each other and being a part of an amazing group of talented, thoughtful, compassionate and considerate individuals whose goal is to provide our students with the best possible education under some of the most challenging conditions. Have an amazing school year, keep up the incredible job you are all doing and stay healthy.

AI

Come to us for the savings...



SCAN ME



DINING & SHOPPING DISCOUNTS



TRAVEL & TOURS



CAR & TRUCK RENTALS

Come back for the insurance



SCAN ME



LIFE INSURANCE



AUTO & HOME



LONG-TERM CARE & DISABILITY

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org, call 800-626-8101 or scan the QR codes above.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

MEMBER BENEFITS
nysut
Working to Benefit You

Sept./Oct. '20

First Vice President - Ray Stenberg



The Long Game

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year and what a year it will be. After a sudden shutdown in March, we were left with a whole new way of teaching and providing services to those we educate. We stepped up to the plate and continued doing what we do best and because we all worked together as classroom teams, we got the job done and received our paychecks right up to the end of the year. Unlike what occurred in many districts throughout the state, all of our members maintained their employment at Eastern Suffolk BOCES, unlike para educators in sister unions who were told their services weren't needed during the shutdown. Our union had a position at the table and negotiated several agreements with BOCES that provided us with pandemic personal days and additional compensation for teachers and paras. It is because over many years the BEES have maintained a collaborative relationship with BOCES to ensure that our members are not harmed through no fault of their own.

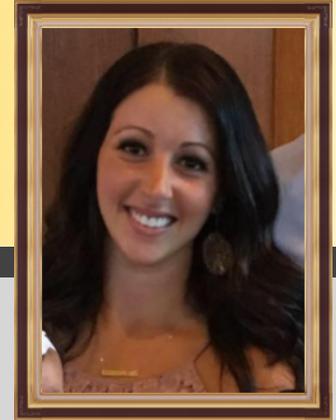
From all accounts, summer school went well and the COVID procedures that were worked out by the re-opening committee and approved by the state have been fully implemented throughout the agency. Now, of course nothing is perfect and there are going to be issues. However, when things come up, we deal with them and we usually come with a positive outcome. Please be patient as we fix problems and know that there will always be someone from your union to assist you in the event that something happens to you.

Election Day is quickly approaching, and we are at a defining moment in our nation's history. We have to decide where we want to go as a country. Do we want to maintain civil rights or take them away? Do we want to tell people that they can no longer marry the person that they fell in love with? Do we want to protect the police or demonize them as they put their lives on the line each and every day to keep us safe? Do we want to abolish unions and eliminate all of the protections and benefits that we have worked so hard to get for our members? Remember, we lost the Janus case which resulted in the loss of thousands of union members throughout the country. Now that we are getting another Supreme Court justice quickly confirmed, those who want to destroy us have just hit the jackpot. When a 6-3 majority decides the next union busting case, we will be harmed in ways that make me cringe. Just think about it, all those people who said, "that'll never happen" will be scratching their heads when they themselves get harmed. With this being said, I beg you and I implore you to make sure your voice is heard on November 3rd (or before) as you cast your ballot for your future, both personal and professional. There is no excuse not to vote in New York State. Vote your conscience and be prepared to live with your decision. We can't tell you how to vote but we can certainly inform you as to who has your back and who doesn't. It's so obvious!

In closing, I want to wish everybody a very happy and healthy Thanksgiving. Cherish the time with your families as you figure out a way to safely celebrate the holiday without jeopardizing each other's health.

RAY

Area VP for Para Educators - Amanda Pica



Amazing SRPs

Welcome to the start of the 2020–2021 school year! Although we started off this year with a lot of uncertainty, I am so proud of all of our members for tackling this year head on. Adjusting to the “new normal” has definitely brought on some new challenges.

Over these last 7 months, our executive board has worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and security for all of our members. I encourage you to stay informed, attend union meetings, ask questions, and utilize all of your resources. We are all here to support one another. Thank you to all of our building reps. who have really stepped up. If you haven't already, you should familiarize yourself with your building rep. and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Please take the time to read and understand your contract, pro–practice agreement, and Employee Handbook.

I urge you to take care of yourself, laugh, and enjoy some time with family as we approach a very long winter. I wish you all a happy SRP day; you are so appreciated! Please stay healthy and never hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Amanda





Guiding Guidelines

Welcome all,

The 2020 year has redefined the teacher role across the nation. I continue to be in awe of the ESB staff for meeting these challenges with the utmost professionalism. Our agency secured student enrollment within our special education programs by placing virtual students on our rosters. In the elementary programs, this requires us to teach in person to some and virtual to others. Due to the scheduling limitations, many of you are giving up your preps and lunches to accommodate the needs of the students we serve. Many of you working with the older students are teaching synchronously throughout the day. Your union realizes the extra burdens placed upon you, and over the past several months has worked hard with the agency to financially compensate you for your extra efforts. In early October, a Letter of Agreement was signed which will allow your hours to be retroactively paid once inputted into Wincap and approved by your administrator. If you are working with virtual students and should you choose to, you can engage with those virtual students during a lunch or prep period and be eligible for compensation. Each building and program is different, so be sure to check with your building rep. for the specific protocols your building is following.

Many of our educators provide virtual lessons using the Zoom platform; the agency has also worked to protect us and has provided assurances and for teachers when working on Zoom: Some of our students may need assistance from their parent while working Zoom, however, if a parent becomes a concern, they can log off. **At no time should a Zoom session be recorded** by students/parents. If that happens and they refuse to stop, you may end the session.

Last year, your union worked hard to negotiate Personal Pandemic Days. This year's Personal Pandemic Day is for both blue and yellow contracts. This day does not count against the total number of days in your bank. It also does not roll over into your bank at the end of the school year, so please use it before the end of June.

The CDC guidelines state we need to stay home if we are sick; your union has worked with the agency to ensure any time out will not be held against us for summer school.



Guiding Guidelines

The agency understands the demands they have placed upon all staff, in addition to providing resources to support us. Please know, production on the equipment and materials urgently needed were halted for months, due to Covid. Laptops, polycarbonate screens, PPE supplies are all ordered and hopefully will be here soon. We have also been assured that all programs have sanitizer, gloves, masks, and face shields upon request.

As a board, we have received numerous requests for information about what to do if exposed to Covid. A flow chart was created and is easy to follow.


 New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Pre-K to Gr 12 COVID-19 Toolkit

NYSDOH COVID-19 In-Person Decision Making Flowsheet for Staff To Go To Work

Can I Go to Work at the School Today?

<p>In the past 10 days, have you been tested for the virus that causes COVID-19, also known as SARS-CoV-2?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">YES ↓ NO →</p> <p>Was the test result positive OR are you still waiting for the result?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">YES ↓ NO →</p>	<p>In the last 14 days, have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveled internationally to a CDC level 2 or 3 COVID-19 related travel health notice country; or • Traveled to a state or territory on the NYS Travel Advisory List; or • Been designated a contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 by a local health department? <p style="text-align: center;">YES ↓ NO →</p>	<p>Do you currently have (or have had in the last 10 days) one or more of these new or worsening symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A temperature greater than or equal to 100.0° F (37.8° C) • Feel feverish or have chills • Cough • Loss of taste or smell • Fatigue/feeling of tiredness • Sore throat • Shortness of breath or trouble breathing • Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea • Muscle pain or body aches • Headaches • Nasal congestion/runny nose <p style="text-align: center;">YES ↓ NO →</p>	
<p>You cannot go to work at the school today and must stay in isolation (at home and away from others) until your test results are back and are negative OR if positive, the local health department has released you from isolation.</p>	<p>You cannot go to work at the school today.</p> <p>If you have had any of these exposures, you must stay at home until your local health department releases you from quarantine, at least 14 days from the date of your last exposure. A negative diagnostic COVID-19 test does not change the 14-day quarantine requirement.</p> <p>School staff are not essential workers and must quarantine.</p>	<p>You cannot go to work at the school today.</p> <p>You should be assessed by your health care provider (HCP). Call your HCP before going to any in-person visits to tell them about your COVID-19 symptoms. If you do not have a health care provider, call your local health department.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">You can go to work at the school today!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Make sure you wear a face covering or face mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands frequently.</p>

Report absences, symptoms, and positive COVID-19 test results to your school.

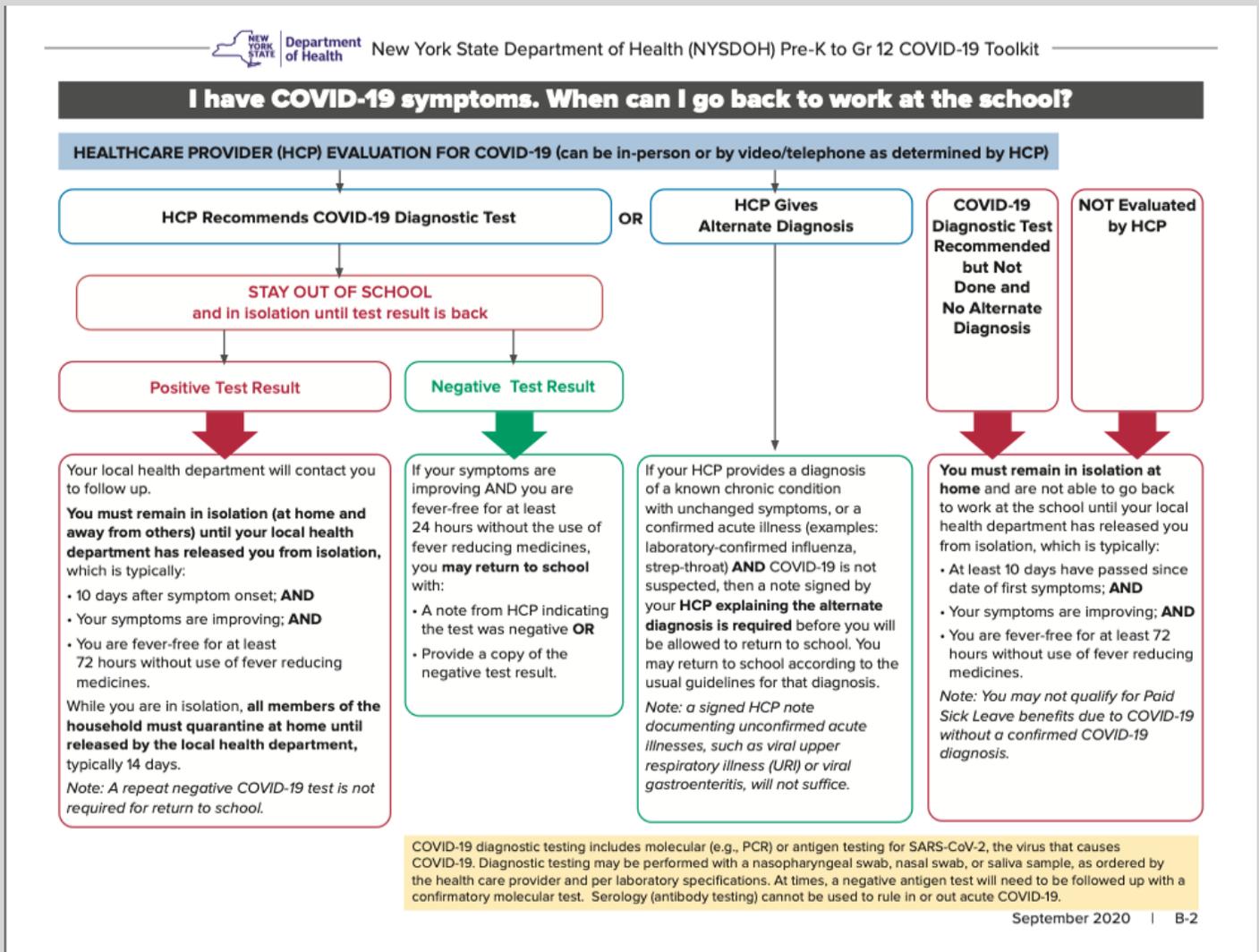
SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU HAVE:

- Trouble breathing or are breathing very quickly
- Are too sick to drink fluids
- Severe abdominal pain, diarrhea or vomiting
- Change in skin color - becoming pale, patchy and/or blue
- Racing heart or chest pain
- Decreased urine output
- Lethargy, irritability, or confusion

September 2020 | B-1



Guiding Guidelines

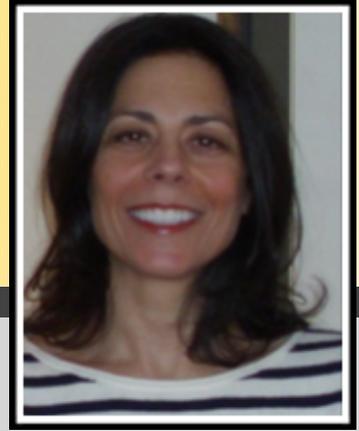


I thank you all for your continued efforts to provide an outstanding learning experience for the students of Eastern Suffolk BOCES. Should you ever need your union, please reach out to your building rep and he/she will get you the information you need.

Stay safe and take care of yourselves,

Patti

Area VP for Itinerants/SAS - Kristin Ericson Abbruzzese



Thank You

Welcome back to all. I hope you and your families are well and healthy; that truly is the most important aspect of this time. Where to begin? In these uncharted waters of a school year like no other that we have experienced, I would like to first welcome all of our newly hired members and encourage you to reach out and ask for help. Starting a new job, especially during a pandemic, is no easy task. I also encourage our more senior members to lend a helping hand because an itinerant position is like no other and has many different facets.

Secondly, I would like to thank all the itinerants that attended my meeting in October. I find those meetings are a good place to support one another and touch base with what is happening in the many different roles we fill in different locations. I would like to remind all of us to be ready for anything; 2020 has been a year that we have all had to let go of many routines with an understanding that things can change at the drop of a hat. I know it can become cumbersome to carry home our essentials in case we need to do our jobs from home, but it is a good idea to be prepared. Please speak up if there is something you need to be able to work effectively from home, we will help you get it if we can.

I want to remind all of us that we are still responsible to keep our licenses up to date and to send in your renewed license when need be. Please reach out to your building reps or a member of the executive board should you have a question or unsure of something. Again, these are unsettling times and we are all learning things as we go along. Sometimes, just when we think we have the information down, things change again. I want to assure you, your executive board is working tirelessly for you and trying our best to keep you all in the loop once information is finalized. Our contractual benefits officer, Nick Deblanco, is working overtime to get you the answers regarding placement leaves, your rights, etc. His email is Beescbo@gmail.com Each member's situation can be very different from another, so I urge you to reach out for yourself and not just gather information from coworkers who may have had a similar situation.

If you would like your seniority number, I do need you to reach out to me personally in writing. I cannot give your number to anyone else including the rep from your building. Finally, I think this school year will be a year of patience and resilience. I understand all the pressures, stress and demands you are going through; I am right beside you, and honestly, I am sure we all wish we could blink and these unsettled times would be over but we cannot. I try to focus on one day at a time and do my honest best for myself, my family and my job. I put myself first because if you don't take care of yourself, even if it is to give yourself 30 minutes a day to recharge in a positive manner, you won't be able to be your best. I urge you to reach out to EAP if you find yourself needing extra support to get through these times. I want to end by sending well wishes to our members who have battled COVID, know someone dealing with COVID or have experienced a loss due to COVID. Happy Fall and thank you for sticking with the union. I can be reached at beesvpitin@gmail.com and SHS 631-622-1227.

Kristin



Finding the Positives

These days, it is easy to focus on the negative. The spread of COVID-19 is having a devastating effect on countries' economies and their citizens' health. However, I am somewhat comforted that the history of past pandemics and crises suggests an eventual recovery plan for the world.

I continue to be in awe of how our members handled the crisis and continue to do so. When the crisis hit and we were closed down, we as educators created online classrooms in a matter of days utilizing the full potential of the communication technologies that the 21st century has bestowed upon us. Though it was probably the biggest challenge that many of us will face in our careers, we have demonstrated the motivation and mind shifts that were needed to research, innovate and act quickly. With every crisis comes deep challenges and opportunities for transformation. Given the dedication of our teachers and our solution-based mindsets, we will come out of this situation better and stronger.

This school year presents its own set of challenges with CTE classrooms maxed to the hilt. Though high enrollment is usually a positive thing for us, maintaining health safety protocols is now difficult, to say the least. Know that your Executive Board is in constant communication with administration advocating for our members in all aspects of their teaching responsibilities. Please reach out to me with any concerns that you have and I assure you that they will not go unanswered. Your Executive Board is working (sometimes around the clock) to keep our members safe and uphold the contract.

As we continue into the uncertainty that this year will present, I am proud to be a part of the BEES membership. Teachers have stepped up to make sure that students are taken care of beyond just the academic needs. We have come together as a teaching family who has shown support for each other in an abundance of ways. We are deeply committed to the success of our students in spite of the obstacles that we will certainly overcome.

Rosaria

"Tell me and I forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I understand." ~ Chinese proverb

Contractual Benefits Officer - Nick DeBlanco



It Benefits You to Know

Good day members,

This has been quite a wild ride this year, hasn't it? I would first like to applaud all of the hard work of every single person working, from the lunchroom to the board room, and everywhere in between. The most mundane tasks are now twice as difficult as they have ever been before. Trying to stay student focused and safe at the same time is difficult, and I want to assure you all that the executive board is working hard to address all concerns as they come up. I have some housekeeping items I would like to share with you:

1. Open enrollment begins in November. Any discrepancies in your care plan are showing up at this time. November is the time to adjust that. Whether it's approving a new medical plan or adjusting your FLEX benefit deductions, now is the time to do that.
2. Anticipate what your needs will be in the near future. I am sure you are seeing how quickly things turn around. Medical expenditures, dependent care and childcare have all been turned upside down since the pandemic began. When funding a FLEX plan keep in mind, any money not used will be forfeited at the end of the term. During the pandemic, you may want to think smaller because of the uncertainty. The rules governing the FLEX spending account have temporarily been adjusted. For example, regular pharmacy and hygiene items are now qualified purchases. This is a way to use funds set aside earlier in the year. These changes are set to expire soon, so do not count on these changes in the future.
3. You may be having financial trouble due to the pandemic. Some households have lost additional work hours or counted on summer employment, that never happened. One way to free up some cashflow is to temporarily reduce contributions to your voluntary retirement accounts. Your 403 b or 507 type plans can be temporarily reduced to put those funds back into your paycheck.
4. For many of us the anxiety and not knowing what comes next can be overwhelming. Take time to decompress if possible. Seek out friends and family to change the mood cycle. We have a great resource at Eastern Suffolk BOCES called the Employee Assistance Program. The program has a wide range of assistance from helping with small to medium tasks to counseling and referrals. If you find yourself in need please ask for help. If you can offer assistance let the E.A.P. know also, this is a network style of assistance. Email eap@esboces.org. Please be assured that all matters are kept confidential.
5. Finally, I would like to say that we are going to move past this. Superstorms, power failures, hurricanes, freezing temperatures, and many other things have been occurring for years; we will also get through this difficult time.

Stay safe, stay upbeat and stay informed as a BEES member.

-Nick

**UNION
STRONG
UNION
PROUD**

Membership Secretary - Lisa Mongiello



A Happy Hive

I want to welcome all our members back to the 2020-21 school year! I know we ended last year and began this one like no other, but I have to say that I am incredibly proud to be a part of our union executive board as we have navigated many changes. Throughout the summer we met weekly and have diligently tried to keep information readily available. We hope that our members recognize that we are working tirelessly to respond to questions and concerns. Together, we are union strong!

There have been many changes in membership, and I have to thank our executive board, building representatives and members for your patience as I work to navigate them. As many of you know, last year we piloted the new online enrollment system for NYSUT to assist with signing newly hired staff members, changing from the traditional paper-based enrollment forms. It took a lot of work to set up and get it working well, and we had the system functioning very well prior to our closure in March. Unfortunately, NYSUT made changes to their online enrollment right before the school year started in September and we are not able to enroll members in the same manner. To allow our newest employees access to membership we have reverted to paper enrollment forms. There is an online option, though as with any new system there are challenges to navigate. I cannot begin to express my appreciation for everyone who has been patient as I continue to navigate this process again, in what we all know is a very different school year for all of us.

Once the new NYSUT online enrollment is up and running as it is intended, all new employees hired by Eastern Suffolk BOCES who fall under the Blue or Yellow contracts will receive an e-mail invite from NYSUT to their personal e-mail that will allow them to enroll electronically, which allows for his/her membership to be instant. I receive new hire lists from the payroll department, usually following pay-periods, which enables me to upload potential members and place them in the NYSUT system. NYSUT will then send the new member an e-mail to their personal e-mail address. I will then send an e-mail to inform the new hires of how to enroll online and access other union resources. Once a new hire enrolls online, their membership is immediate, and payroll will be notified for dues deductions. While the system is not currently perfected, I am hopeful this will make membership easily accessible for all staff that would like to join the union as we move forward. Until this system works as intended, all new hires can enroll using paper forms through their building union representatives.

Membership Secretary - Lisa Mongiello



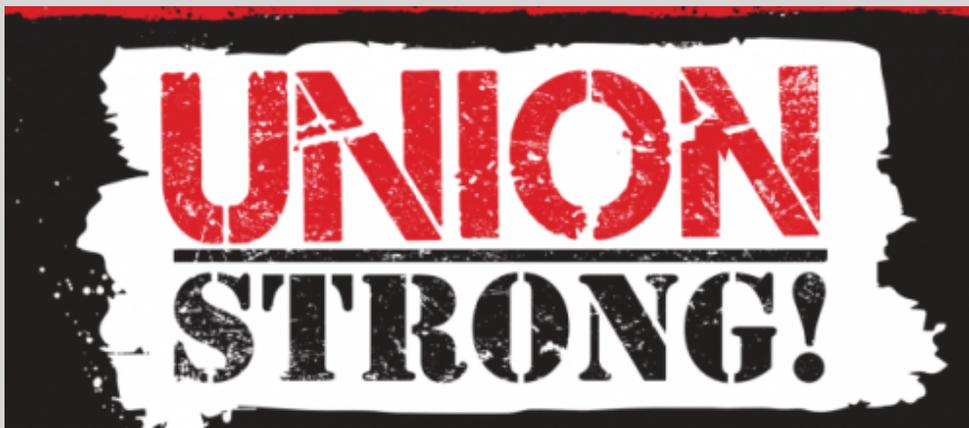
A Happy Hive

I encourage all of you to look at the many benefits that come with your membership. If you need your NYSUT member number, please contact me at mongiellobeeunion@gmail.com so I can help you! There are great discounts for services, education, and other great offers that your membership allows you to have access to on www.NYSUT.org!

I take great pride in the opportunity to be an executive board member for our union. We have a great team that truly cares about our members, students, and all of the issues that affect them. Behind the scenes, your building representatives and board members are doing an incredible job and it is an honor to work with each of them. Thank you for sticking with our union!

A helpful hint: If you have a change of name or address, please send an email to mongiellobeeunion@gmail.com so I can update it for you!

Lisa



Treasurer - Michelle Tinter



Budgeting the BEES

Welcome to the fall 2020 **BEES Beacon**. As we enter into our first few months of a very different school year, I hope this article finds all of our members settling in and finding our “new way” of teaching.

Thank you to all our members who joined our opening day Zoom meeting where we reviewed and adopted our budget for the **2020-2021** fiscal year. Below you will find the **2020-2021 Dues Schedule** for your review. There is a slight increase in the local category only for full dues paying members. As for the remaining categories, for the third consecutive year there is NO local increase.

Wishing you all a successful school year, and a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!

Michelle

NYSUT/AFT/LOCAL Dues Schedule for 2020-2021 Membership Year

NYSUT (Codes)	Membership Category By Salary Range	NYSUT Annual Per Capital	AFT Annual Per Capital	LOCAL DUES	TOTAL NYSUT/AFT/ LOCAL DUES	AMOUNT Deducted per Pay Period (18 Pay Periods)	INCREASE Per Pay Period
(1) Full	\$34,000 and higher	\$378.00	\$234.96	\$354.04	\$967.00	\$53.72	\$1.00
(7) 3/4	\$25,500 to 33,999	\$283.50	\$117.48	\$220.32	\$621.30	\$34.52	-0-
(2) 1/2	\$17,000 to \$25,499	\$189.00	\$117.48	\$168.11	\$474.59	\$26.37	-0-
(5) 1/4	\$8,500 to \$16,999	\$94.50	\$58.74	\$115.27	\$268.51	\$14.92	-0-
(8) 1/8	Under \$8,499	\$47.25	\$29.37	\$33.80	\$110.42	\$6.14	-0-
(6)	Unpaid leave Laid-off	\$10.00	\$12.00		\$22.00	\$1.22	-0-
(9) **	Per-Diem Substitute	---	---	---	---	\$.70/day	-0-
(3)	Retirees (pre-funded)	---	---	\$35.00	---	---	-0-
*	Full/Split	\$378.00	\$117.48	\$272.00	\$767.48	\$42.64	-0-

Note:* A special split NYSUT/AFT category within Code 1 (Full Dues) exists only if members are earning more than \$34,000 but less than the basic teacher's salary.

**Per- Diem Substitutes dues are \$.70 per day for NYSUT/AFT up to a maximum of 1/2 dues. Refer to Membership Reporting & Dues Transmittal Handbook for additional information.

Full Dues Paying Member	2019-2020	2020-2021	Increase
NYSUT	\$378.00	\$378.00	0
AFT	\$234.96	\$234.96	0
LOCAL	\$336.04	\$354.04	\$18.00
TOTAL	\$949.00	\$967.00	\$18.00

Proposed income for the 2020-2021 budget is based on an estimated (full)625, (Split)40, (3/4),140(1/2),720 (1/4) 20 dues contributions and interest from savings. Active Members + Leave = 1,526 Total Members.

The option to pay dues in full is no longer available.

Submitted by the **BEES Budget Committee**:

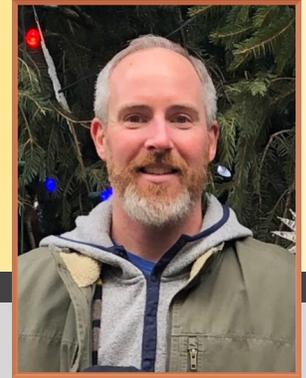
Jim Beck, President, Michelle Tinter, Treasurer, Danielle Ibba & Keith Flynn, Active Member & Chairperson.

Dues deductions begin the 3rd pay period for (18) consecutive pay periods.

VOTE/COPE
So much to gain, so little to give!
If you are not a vote cope member, please fill out a card this morning for automatic payroll deduction one time a year of \$12.00(aide) \$25.00(TA) \$50.00(Teacher) donation.

Reminder All up & coming retirees must join the B.E.E.S retiree Chapter in order to retain any insurance you may have through NYSUT.

Grievance Officer - Keith Flynn



Follow the Science

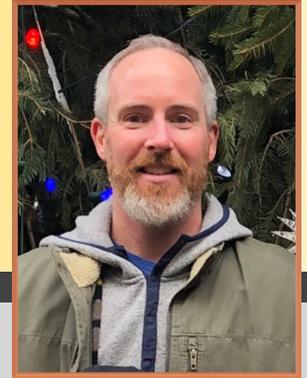
Many of our lives have been changed over the last 7 months, COVID-19, social unrest, social distancing, loss of loved ones, the historic rise in the mental health crisis, virtual learning/related services, wearing masks and the upcoming national election is as contentious as any election in history. The financial ramifications of the COVID crisis, rising unemployment, federal deficit rising over 3 trillion, rising Suffolk County deficit of 1.5 billion and some school districts have either exceeded personnel or negotiated with their local unions to save jobs. It's daunting to reflect on how life has changed so much in such a short period of time.

We have learned so much from the pandemic, and we all would like to resume the lives we used to know. The questions are, if and when? Operation Warp Speed is the fastest race in history to establish and implement a vaccine. There are many questions surrounding the science and efficacy of the vaccine, but the government is stating there will be 300 million doses available by January 2021. We are all staying tuned...

Many parts of the country are managing the rising numbers and hospitalizations of positive COVID-19 cases: the FDA has approved the first drug to treat COVID-19: Remdesivir, which is an antiviral medicine. COVID-19 medical treatments in hospitals have drastically improved since the start of the pandemic. At the start of the pandemic, patients had a 25.6% chance of dying and currently the rate has dropped by 18 percentage points to 7.6% (2020, October 20th; Studies Point to Big Drop In COVID-19 Death Rates. NPR). Although the article points out that the rate is still a lot higher than the flu and those who recover can suffer complications for months or even longer. The article points out that mortality rate is consistently decreasing among all age groups even though recently, the younger generation has been experience higher COVID cases and hospitalizations. Every day, we learn new information in the fight against this highly infectious disease.

I always follow the science. My grandfather was a scientist and would always explain all the ingredients in food packages, create his own medicinal products, etc. Therefore, it was ingrained in my nature to follow the science. We all can understand how social distancing and proper hygiene can help keep us safe, but there wasn't a lot of data surrounding the efficacy of wearing masks. The CDC now states that if an infected person is wearing a mask around a non-infected person, it's about 80% effective compared to not wearing a mask (The research was based on a standard 3 ply mask).

Grievance Officer - Keith Flynn



Follow the Science

So, we are all back to work in the schools trying to work through a pandemic. Although many of the schools had upgrades in ventilation systems, PPE equipment were handed out, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc. many of the buildings are still waiting for the order of technology and polycarbonate dividers to come in. There have been upgrades in classrooms with cameras being installed for virtual learning. Supply and demand are obviously affecting our ability to do our job, simultaneously trying to be safe and healthy. Many of us are experiencing frustration, stress and are overwhelmed at times. The union is consistently working with upper administration to address many of the pertinent issues and will continue to do so. During challenging times, we must all work together to stay united.

There are so many diverse needs within this agency and it's a challenge to meet the needs of all our members, families, districts, etc..... But, from my experience over the last year working on the executive board, there is a ton of work that goes into assisting our members (Exponentially so during a national crisis). Everyone has a right to have their voice heard and receive the updated information in a timely manner. That was the reason the closed Facebook page was created. At the same time, you have leadership on the building level (Building Reps.) that really is an intricate part in delivering information to the board to help our members. Since I have only been part of union leadership for the last 3 years, I see how it works on the building level as a rep. (Sequoia) and on the board as the Grievance Officer. We are 2 separate contracts, but are ONE Strong Union! The union is like a gigantic family, who at times can disagree, but we are ultimately stronger when working together.

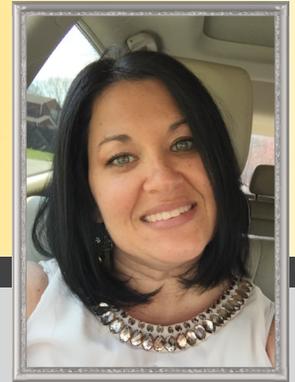
Lastly, I would remind all members that a grievance has to be a direct violation of the contract. It's time sensitive and should be discussed with your building rep. before bring it to the Executive Board.

In closing, I wish everyone a healthy year and we will continue to work tirelessly to support our members. From my family to yours, I wish you a safe and healthy year!

Keith Flynn



Social Chair - Danielle Ibba-Morabito



Let's be Social(ly Distanced)

Hi everyone,

I can't believe we are in November already. It has been such a challenging time for everyone, but I must say I am honored to work alongside all of you. You are all heroes in my eyes. We are all trying our best to keep ourselves and everyone around us safe. We have been thinking out of the box the last couple of months and have some fun things planned.

We are excited to have some giveaway raffles at your building union meetings. You might be a lucky winner! Stay tuned for more information to come about the 2021 end of the year honorarium.

* The loss of a loved one is an emotional time, and one of the worst things we may go through in life. It is with that thought that we would like to reach out to our families in need in a timely manner. There are guidelines for sending out cards or a small token to the family of a member. In the past, I have gotten several requests that I was not able to send out in a timely manner because the guidelines below were not adhered to. Please make sure that you include all of the information listed below so that we may pay our respects to the families in their time of need. Thank you.

Guidelines for Welfare:

A bereavement card will be sent in the event of a member's spouse, parent, child, or sibling's death. In the case of a member passing, special circumstances will then apply.

The procedure for a sympathy card to be sent is as follows: Members should contact their building representative as soon as they believe a member meets the above guidelines and a bereavement card should be sent. The building representative then should contact me via email: daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com with the member's name and address and the name and relation to the deceased.

In the event it is a member who has passed, I still need their name, and address and also a home or cell number of a member of their family so that we can acknowledge their service with us in a special way.

If you need more info, please see your building rep. check out our Bees website or feel free to send an email.

Danielle

Recording Secretary - Angela Ritchie



Nice Notes

Welcome Back!

I hope everyone had a decent summer and was able to enjoy themselves. It has been a long and unsettling six months and to be back in our buildings might give us some type of normality. However we still find ourselves with many unanswered questions, and we hope to put our members at ease.

When we first closed for the school year, the executive board met every week to try and come up with solutions to many of the problems that arose on a daily basis. Weekly meetings with the agency, preparation for the new school year, virtual teaching, and dealing with life's uneasiness, kept us quite busy and overwhelmed.

The closed FB page that the executive board created provides continuous communication for the executive board officers and members with each other.

Our virtual meetings with William Oquendo, NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, and the Opening Day General Membership meeting, provided members with important information. Concerns regarding COVID-19 guidelines, medical and family leaves (FMLA), and other issues were dealt with, and many of questions answered.

Please take advantage of all the information provided on the BEES Beacon website and reach out to your building reps. who will keep you informed on all union matters.

I wish everyone a safe and healthy school year, and remember we are here for you. Thank you for sticking with the union!

Angela



Retiree Chapter Chairperson - Terry Kalb



Nice Notes

Hello BEES Retirees

Thank you to all of you who have paid your annual \$35 dues as of this date. If you have not paid, this is your last opportunity before you will be removed from our mailing list and Facebook group. Our newsletters are for Members Only! Once more, make the check out to BEES (NOT ME) and mail to BEES, PO Box 798, Wading River, NY 11792.

OPEN WINDOW NOVEMBER

As promised, here is an update about health insurance "Open Window" month, always November for us. All BEES retirees should have received a letter from ES BOCES with comparative info on your options (Medicare comparisons are excluded- more on that later), as well as instructions for making a change which would take effect January 1, 2021. If you don't want to make a change, DO NOTHING. If you have not received the letter, email HRBenefits@esboces.org right away to update your address and get the form. If you are already on Medicare, you should also have received a second letter requesting annually updated information about who is on your policy and eligible to receive reimbursement for Medicare premiums. You must return this to ESBOCES by Nov. 19th. When you sign up for Medicare which you are required to do within 3 months prior to your 65th birthday, you must also notify HR to make sure they know you are now paying premiums. If you or your spouse are collecting Social Security, your premiums will come out of your SS payment, and will be documented by the SS office. Save the annual SS form you will receive because HR will want a copy of this letter documenting your premium payments. **If you or your spouse are paying your premiums for Medicare directly, SAVE EVERY BILL! You will need these to prove what you have paid in order to be reimbursed!**

MEDICARE INFO

I have had a long discussion with Marysue DiLeva at ES BOCES HR about Open Window Information. ESBOCES is a neutral party and does not promote one plan over another in their literature. They do not include all the Traditional Medicare benefits in their charts as that program is so comprehensive that it would be comparing apples and oranges. As your Union Rep, I too wish to avoid any perception that I favor one plan over another. It is my job to help you have access to any information you need to evaluate the plans and find the best fit for you.

If you are Medicare age, you may keep your NYSHIP Traditional Medicare Part B coverage or your East End Medicare Advantage Plan, or switch between them by acting this month. If you are dissatisfied with your switch, you can switch back next November. Traditional Medicare/NYSHIP gives you all the benefits of Medicare, with NYSHIP as your supplemental Part B and prescription drugs. If you are in the East End Health Plan, when you sign up for Medicare you will be placed into their Medicare Advantage Program, which REPLACES Traditional Medicare, and differs somewhat from the East End Health Plan for people under 65. For more information about this new insurance plan, which was introduced in January 2020, Frank Perry of the EEHP will host an informational ZOOM meeting on November 16th at 10am. It is open to ALL BEES Retirees who want to know more about this insurance, however you must register first. Remember that Mr. Perry represents East End, and he is not going to give you the full picture of Traditional Medicare's benefits and supplemental coverage- his job is to promote his plans. **A comparison chart of East End Medicare Advantage with NYSHIP Part B alone does NOT represent an accurate comparison of Traditional Medicare PLUS NYSHIP Part B. You will need to do your own comparison between Traditional Medicare/NYSHIP Part B, with Medicare Advantage, to see which one best fits you and your family's needs.**



BEES

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

Union Strong

Jim Beck - President
Asha Mazza-Shaw - Executive Vice President
Al Rios - Executive Vice President
Ray Stenberg - First Vice President
Amanda Pica - Area Vice President Para Educators
Patti Richards - Area Vice President Special Education
Kristin Ericson-Abbruzzese - Area Vice President Itinerants/SAS
Rosaria Catania - Area Vice President CTE/SCE
Michelle Tinter - Treasurer
Nick DeBlanco - Contractual Benefits Officer
Lisa Mongiello - Membership Secretary
Keith Flynn - Grievance Officer
Danielle Ibba-Morabito - Social Chair
Angela Ritchie - Recording Secretary
Dennis Charaton - Webmaster
Terry Kalb - Retiree Chapter Chairperson
Mary Longo - BEES Office Secretary
Asha Mazza-Shaw - BEES Beacon Publisher

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

AFT Local 3037

NYSUT Local 22-220

440 Waverly Ave.

Bldg. 4, Suite 12

Patchogue, NY 11772

(631)475-4704

BOCESBEES@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/bees3037

www.beesbeacon.org

Proud members of AFT, NYSUT and AFL-CIO

The BEES Beacon is the official publication of the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk First Supervisory District

